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Your consumer education connection

Food Safety Educator

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inside
SERIALS ACQUISITION BRANCH

A Food Safety Curriculum For Kids!

"Stop the presses!" exclaims Tyler, one of the star reporters for the Washburn Word school newspaper. Key basketball players and the coach have been sidelined by a mysterious illness and now two student reporters are hot on the investigative trail.

That's the start of a 20-minute video that launches a fun and fact-packed food safety curriculum for kids in grades four through six.

The curriculum, titled "Your Game Plan for Food Safety," was produced by the Partnership for Food Safety Education and the Food Marketing Foundation as part of the Fight BAC!™ campaign.

The materials, as project manager Kelly Woods said, "are frisky. The video takes food safety and 'MTV-izes' it."

The result is a fun learning experience with music, great visuals, experiments, and activities that have been kid-tested.

The curriculum comes with the video, a two-sided color poster, "BAC-Catchers," and a teacher's activity and experiment guide.

Educators can order and download materials from the www.fightbac.org web site.

In addition, educators will find a special Fight BAC!™ Teacher Web Page that will be updated to include additional ideas and experiments contributed by other teachers and BAC-fighters across the country.

The curriculum package focuses learning around the four key Fight BAC!™ messages: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

Experiments and activities in the teachers' guide revolve around each of those four principles. For example with the experiments, kids learn a variety of concepts:

- How microorganisms can grow
- How germs can spread through "cross-contamination"
- How to test to see if foods are thoroughly cooked.

For one activity, the kids form their own "FBI" team to assess foodborne illness "perils at a picnic." Another activity guides them in doing a home survey.

Sixty "BAC-Catchers" are included in each curriculum package, offering kids the chance to play and learn.

There are also suggestions for school-wide activities, including activities that tie into September's National Food Safety Education Month.

Don't forget the BAC! Page: You'll find out about the new Fight BAC!™ puppets and a guide for teaching children in grades K through three! Not to mention BAC!'s Virtual Toolbox! Finally, food safety is . . .



Cook It Safely!

“Cook it Safely—It’s a Matter of Degrees” is the theme for this year’s National Food Safety Education Monthsm, which takes place in September.

Cook is one of the four key messages of the education campaign called Fight BAC!tm sponsored by the Partnership for Food Safety Education.

Once again this year, the federal government is teaming up with the restaurant and foodservice industry to promote food safety educational activities throughout the month.

National Food Safety Education Monthsm was initiated by the restaurant and foodservice industry 5 years ago. Today, it has become a major food safety education event for government and consumer organizations as well as the restaurant industry.

Food industry efforts are coordinated by the International Food Safety Council, a coalition of restaurant and foodservice industry professionals committed to food safety education.

According to the Council, this year’s co-chairs for National Food Safety Education Monthsm are the hosts of Food Network’s “Too Hot Tamales,” and “Tamales World Tour,” Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger.

The Council’s food safety education materials include a consumer brochure called “Cook It Safely—It’s a Matter of Degrees” as well as a *Training and Promotion Guide* for foodservice and supermarket operators and related organizations.

The guide has “fill-in-the-blank” promotional materials for employee newsletters, press releases and public service announcements.

All materials are available through the Council’s web site:

www.foodsafetycouncil.org



For National Food Safety Education Monthsm this year, the federal government has produced a *Consumer Education Planning Guide* packed with ideas and tools for organizing food safety education activities and events.

The guide for educators includes:

- Suggested activities and events, including parades, walks, and workshops.
- A sample proclamation for local officials
- Logos and artwork
- A sample press release and public service announcements for radio.

The guide also includes a reproducible Fight BAC!tm brochure which explains all four food safety messages: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

In addition, the guide has copies of the Fight BAC!tm brochure in Spanish and Chinese.

Educators will also be happy to learn that the guide includes an updated fact sheet from USDA explaining the different types of food thermometers, how to use them, and how to calibrate them.

To keep things fun, the guide for educators also has a lot of activities, including:

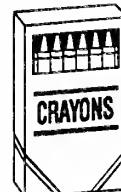
Experiments



A Game

A Crossword Puzzle

A Coloring Page.



The *Consumer Education Planning Guide* is available through the government web site:

www.FoodSafety.gov/Sept •

Thermometers Are . . .

Hot! Hot!

From Maine to Florida to the Colorado Rockies, grocery stores are pitching thermometers and safe cooking of hamburgers.

Slogans include:

- Don't Put it on the Bun Until it's Done!
- Do a 160!
- Color is Misleading—Use a

Thermometer to do the Reading!

With impetus from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), grocery stores throughout the country are promoting thermometer use. Their programs are innovative, community-based and tackling a tough sell: encouraging consumers to use food thermometers every day, not just for special meals.

Take a look at one campaign launched by Giant Food, Inc., in January 1999 in the Washington, D.C., area.

Giant Food Inc. pulled out all stops in the campaign which has included full-page promotions in The Washington Post, radio public service announcements, articles in the in-store promotionals, labels on ground beef packages and prominent displays by ground beef sales. The results?

From January to April they sold more than 24,000 thermometers and T sticks. Usual yearly sales are a couple of thousand, according to Giant's Eileen Katz.

For Memorial Day, Giant re-tuned the campaign with a new slogan and by late June had sold more than 40,000 thermometers and T sticks.

And, said Katz, "ground beef sales have been steady, which we view as a positive. Some people were afraid that talking about safe cooking temperatures would discourage sales—it hasn't been true."

But Giant Food, Inc., has a lot of company promoting safe cooking temperatures.

In 1998 Wegmans Food Markets, Inc., was one of the first grocery stores to unveil a thermometer campaign. It was a major promotional effort—which also increased beef sales. The campaign featured a label placed on their ground beef packages instructing consumers to cook to 160 degrees F. This summer Wegmans is continuing its educational programs with in-store promotions about safe grilling.

In Colorado, cooperative extension agents are teaming with area grocery stores including Safeway, Albertson's, A&P and Kroger (City Markets) to promote thermometer use.

Copps Food chain in Connecticut is exhorting customers to "Do a 160," while Big W Foods in New England is reminding consumers that "Color is Misleading—Use a Thermometer to do the Reading."

To keep the momentum going, USDA is focus-group testing newly developed materials this summer including a thermometer slogan and symbol.

"We'll be inviting everyone to use these materials. They'll be easy to reproduce and they'll be fun," according to campaign coordinator Holly McPeak.

So stay tuned. You'll be seeing more.

Hot!

RECOMMENDED INTERNAL TEMPERATURES*

Product	Degrees Fahrenheit
Eggs & Egg Dishes	
Eggs	160°
Egg dishes	160°
Ground Meat and Poultry Mixtures	
Turkey, chicken (including patties)	165°
Veal, beef, lamb, pork (including patties)	160°
Fresh Beef	
Medium rare	145°
Medium	160°
Well done	170°
Fresh Lamb	
Medium rare	145°
Medium	160°
Well done	170°
Fresh Pork	
Medium	160°
Well done	170°
Poultry	
Chicken, whole	180°
Turkey, whole	180°
Poultry breasts, roasts	170°
Poultry thighs, wings	180°
Stuffing	165°
Duck and goose	180°
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	160°
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140°

*These temperatures are recommended for consumer cooking. They are not intended for processing, institutional, or foodservice preparation.



A Bit of Perspective

In a March 1999 speech before the Food Industry Conference hosted by Penn State University, Dr. Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary for Food Safety for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, addressed the importance of integrating resources to improve food safety. This excerpt from her speech provides an interesting perspective on the safety of our food.

Food safety has emerged in recent years as a major area of consumer concern and a major area of congressional concern. Widespread media reports of massive contaminated food product recalls and of foodborne illness outbreaks have perhaps contributed to a public perception that the nation's food supply may be less safe today than it was only a few decades ago.

On one hand, that perception is not altogether accurate. While we may be reading and hearing more about contaminated products and about people who get sick from eating those products, we should not conclude that today's food marketplace poses a significantly greater risk to public health. In a world of high technology and rapid, mass communications, we simply are more readily able in the 1990's to identify links between contaminated products and foodborne illnesses and quickly alert consumers, largely through the mass media. I believe the U.S. food supply remains one of the safest, if not the safest in the world.

On the other hand, we have plenty of reasons to remain highly conscious of food supply threats. Today's food production and delivery system is vastly different from yesterday's. Food comes from all over the world. It is

In a world of high technology and rapid, mass communications, we simply are more readily able in the 1990's to identify links between contaminated products and foodborne illnesses and quickly alert consumers, largely through the mass media. I believe the U.S. food supply remains one of the safest, if not the safest in the world.

produced in mass quantities and often shipped great distances in relatively short times.

Food is sold and prepared and cooked in a variety of ways and under a variety of circumstances. In a more fast-paced world, Americans rely more than ever before on food that can be quickly obtained, prepared, and eaten. Add emerging new pathogens and persistent old ones to the changing consumption habits of today's American, and you have a food supply that is not unsafe, but that is vulnerable.

As Under Secretary for the USDA agency that oversees inspection of the nation's meat and poultry and egg products, I am encouraged by our progress in preventing contaminated food products from reaching the marketplace. Our science-based and prevention-oriented inspections system called Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Systems is being implemented in processing plants across the country over a 3 year period that began in January 1998. Results from phase one indicate it is helping to reduce product contamination and foodborne illness.

The President's Food Safety Initiative, which is proposed for its third consecutive funding year in FY 2000, also has contributed to a safer food supply by providing funding for food safety research and education, foodborne illness surveillance and coordination, inspection, and other activities critical to public health. We are making great progress in the war on unsafe food.

*To read the entire speech, go to:
[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/speeches/
cw_penn.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/speeches/cw_penn.htm)*

President's Council on Food Safety

The President's Council on Food Safety was created in August 1998 and charged with developing a comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities and making recommendations to the President on implementing that plan.

USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Catherine Woteki is co-chair with Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Jane Henney of the strategic planning task force.

The task force will be soliciting input on strategic goals for food safety, including education. During the next year, the task force will be conducting a public dialogue on the plan beginning with a public meeting held July 15, 1999.

For more information on the strategic plan and how you can comment, check the Council's web site at <http://www.foodsafety.gov/presidentscouncil.html>

CDC Web Sites

The Division of Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases, under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is showcasing a new look at its web site: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd

In addition to new graphics, Webmaster Troy Inman reports that he has tripled the content available on the site in the past few months.

The home page now includes:

- Weekly Spotlight
- A site featuring Women and Children and Specific Audiences
- An A-Z listing of more than 100 health topics covering everything from foodborne diseases to women's health and Spanish-language information.

Inman says to stay tuned because he's going to be adding more specific disease information, a kids' section, web-based training modules, and more multimedia components.

Illness Declining Says FoodNet

FoodNet data released in March 1999 show some significant drops in some types of foodborne disease.

Between 1996 and 1998, the data show a 14 percent decline in the rate of *Salmonella* infections and a 44 percent drop in *Salmonella enteritidis*. Data from 1997-1998 indicate a 14 percent decline in the rate of infections caused by *Campylobacter*, the most common bacterial foodborne pathogen in the United States.

According to the report, FoodNet data can be used to document the effectiveness of new food safety control measures such as USDA's Pathogen Reduction and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) rule

Under the Division of Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases is the Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch. Their direct web link is: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/foodborn.htm

This web site links to sources like FoodNet and PulseNet.

Finally, another CDC web site is a "must see." That's the site for The National Center for Infectious Diseases. The Center's site: www.cdc.gov/ncidod

This site provides access to tools like the *Emerging Infectious Disease Journal* and includes "The Hot Zone," listing what's new and what's hot on the horizon including upcoming conferences and newly published documents.

And starting July 1, a whole new look to the main site: www.cdc.gov
Check it out.

as well as HACCP programs undertaken by the Food and Drug Administration for seafood and other products.

FoodNet is a joint effort by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture and selected state health departments.

The report was published March 12, 1999, in the *CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Vol. 48/No.9:
http://www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/mmwr_wk.html

Food Safety Surfing for Seniors



The Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety Initiatives Office has teamed up with the American Association of Retired Persons to sponsor a web site packed with information to help seniors prevent foodborne illness.

The web site address: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/seniorsd.html>

As the web site says: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

In this case, prevention comes with knowledge, and the site provides a wealth of information, including:

- "Why seniors face more risks." New data from CDC show that risks start increasing at age 50. This web page explains why immune systems may become more vulnerable with age.
- "What's a senior to eat?" This page lists foods that seniors may want to avoid, such as raw or unpasteurized milk or uncooked alfalfa sprouts.
- "To market to market:" provides safe shopping tips.
- "Four Simple Steps to Preparing Food at Home," and "Can Your Kitchen Pass the Food Safety Test," provide the basics along with a chart of recommended cooking temperatures.

In addition to all of this, the site provides food safety tips for prepared meals and eating out. Finally—another sure-to-be-popular segment—food safety tips for grandparents taking care of young children.

New Pub on Listeriosis



The Food Safety and Inspection Service recently released a new consumer publication on listeriosis.

The publication is called "Listeriosis and Food Safety Tips." It includes updated advice for consumers who face special risks from foodborne illness, including the elderly, pregnant women and newborns, and people with weakened immune systems:

- Reheat until steaming hot the following types of ready-to-eat foods: hot dogs, luncheon meats, cold cuts, fermented and dry sausage, and other deli-style meat and poultry products. Thoroughly reheating food can help kill any bacteria that might be present. If you cannot reheat these foods, do not eat them.

- Wash hands with hot soapy water after handling these types of ready-to-eat foods. (Wash for at least 20 seconds.) Also wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils. Thorough washing helps eliminate any bacteria that might get on your hands, or other surfaces, from food before it's been reheated.

- Don't eat soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, Camembert and blue-veined or Mexican-style cheese. You can eat hard cheese, processed cheeses, cream cheese, cottage cheese, or yogurt.

- Do not drink raw, unpasteurized milk or eat foods made from it, such as unpasteurized cheese.

- Observe all expiration dates for perishable items that are pre-cooked or ready-to-eat.

- Thoroughly reheat all left-overs.

For a copy of the entire publication, go to: www.FoodSafety.gov

Public Health Resources

The following web sites were noted as useful resources in the January/February issue of NACCHO News, published by the National Association of City and County Health Officials.

CDC Wonder (www.cdc.gov) is an easy-to-use system that provides a single point of access to a variety of CDC reports, guidelines, and public health data. Provides "almost immediate access to the experts who can assist you with a local problem," says NACCHO.

Fed Stats (www.fedstats.gov) is a "megasite with links to over 70 U.S. government agencies" producing statistics of interest to the public.

WWW Virtual Library: Epidemiology (www.epibiostat.ucsf.edu/epidem/epidem.html) is developed and maintained by the University of California. A "wonderful site ...links to everything epidemiologic."

Center for Environmental Information & Statistics (www.epa.gov/ceis/). Developed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Food Safety News Via Email

Just in case you missed this service when we mentioned it several years ago: you can get a free, daily summary of breaking news stories via email.

The service, called FSnet, is produced by Doug Powell at the University of Guelph in Canada. The service provides daily summaries of news

stories concerning foodborne illness throughout the world. It also summarizes newly published journal articles and summaries.

Started in 1995, the service now reaches nearly 4,000 subscribers in 50 countries. In many cases, each subscriber is a "multiplier," passing the service along to others.

To subscribe to FSnet, email to: listser@listser.uoguelph.ca
Leave the subject line blank.
In the message, type:

subscribe fsnet - L first name last name

In addition, articles from FSnet, are now archived at Iowa State University's Food Safety Project web site. It's a great resource. Go to:

www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/families/fs/

For more information, contact Doug Powell at 519/821-1799 or email: dpowell@uoguelph.ca

Hand Washing Videos for Kids

"Hands Down on Germs" is for kids in grades K-three. It seems Bobby is not washing his hands properly, which is giving his hand, Digit, nightmares. Hand puppets teach Bobby that germs can't be seen, the importance of handwashing, and how to wash his hands.

The video runs 8 minutes and costs \$40.

"The War on Germs" is for children in middle school and up. The format is a TV news show, investigating recent unexplained illnesses. The cause? Germs from unclean hands. Undercover agents from the show go into the

newsbriefs

■ The Hotline Has Info From A-Z

bathroom and discover that people aren't washing their hands properly. The video runs 9 minutes and costs \$40.

The videos are produced by the Public Schools Television Services in Oregon. For more information, call 503/916-5838 or email: tv53@pps.k12.or.us

For information on these and other videos, check out the thousands of listings maintained in the database by the USDA/FDA Foodborne Illness Education Center. You can access them on the web at:

www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodborne/foodborn.htm ●

■ Industry/ Regulators Linked

With a web site at www.foodsafety.gov/fstea, a new alliance of retail/foodservice and regulators is taking a step towards sharing resources, educational materials, and Food Code and HACCP information.

The alliance has a long name but a concise purpose. The name: The Food Safety Training and Education Alliance for Retail, Foodservice, Vending, Institutions and Regulators (FSTEAL).

The purpose: to share food safety education materials among alliance members, promote and implement the Food Code, and develop multilingual communications tools.

The site also includes a calendar of upcoming events of interest to food industry, regulators, and educators. ●

USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline answers questions on everything from additives in meat and poultry products to safe handling of "ratites"—that's emu, ostrich, and rhea. (Now you know.)

Consumers can even tap into the Hotline's vast store of knowledge without calling. All they have to do is check the A-Z listing of publications available on our web site: www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/alphapubs.htm.

More than 80 different publications are listed covering a wide variety of topics. In addition to finding out about ratites, you check out some other not-so-usual subjects like:

- Hock Locks and Other Accoutrements
- Food Safety of Jerky
- Crossing the Border with Meat and Poultry
- But you'll also find publications that answer perennial questions:
- Turkey Basics: Safe Cooking, Safe Defrosting, Stuffing
- Top 10 Reasons to Handle Your Food Safely
- Barbecue Food Safety

So just remember, whether by phone or web, the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline has info from A-Z! ●

USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline

1-800-535-4555

F•S•E

The Food Safety Educator is produced by the Food Safety Education Staff, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Please feel free to
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suggestions--
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Virtual Toolbox Has it All...And That's Just the Beginning

The BAC Virtual Toolbox has everything a BAC-fighter could need: press releases, feature stories, scripts for radio spots, pitch letters and even ideas for doing a food safety demonstration on TV.

The first Toolbox topics are geared to summer—and new Toolboxes will be available with each new season.

You can download it from the web site at www.fightbac.org

“You’ll be up and running and ready to “go out and start fighting BAC,” said Susan Conley, BAC coordinator.

The Toolbox is just the first in a number of community-based materials the Fight BAC!™ campaign is developing, according to Conley.

Next in development is a model program for grassroots community campaigns.

As part of the development, Conley is working with two communities on both coasts to pilot-test saturation campaigns.

Information from those campaigns will be used to develop the model program.

Annapolis is the saturation site on the east coast, San Diego on the west.

Starting July 1, “we’re going in with everything,

TV spots, radio announcements, support from local officials, and tons of publications,” Conley said.

The campaigns will be evaluated with interception interviews in the campaign and control areas by the end of the summer.

So stay tuned for the model program—it’s on its way. ●



The Puppets Are Here--And A Presenter's Guide!

For only \$15, you can buy a 10-inch plush, bright-green hand puppet of BAC, complete with “Fight BAC!™” printed across the front.

Combine the hand puppet with the *Fight BAC!™ Presenter's Guide*, and you can't go wrong.

Both are available through the BAC store on the web site: www.fightbac.org

The guide was developed as a teaching tool for educators working with children in kindergarten through third grade. The guide, which sells for \$12, includes story and song scripts, poems for children, a fact sheet for parents, a full-color BAC cut-out, and 10 copies of a full-color game.

And don't forget to check the BAC store for other items including book-marks, coffee mugs, patches, stickers, aprons, and more. ●

Free from CIC!

The Consumer Information Center (CIC) has free single copies of the Fight BAC!™ brochure.

You can order by calling tollfree to 888/878-3256 (888/8 Pueblo), or you can visit the web site at:

www.pueblo.gsa.gov ●

Chinese French GERMAN
KOREAN Russian Spanish

These are just the first of many languages in which BAC materials are being made available. Coming soon—Arabic and Japanese.

Through the Fight BAC!™ web site you can access three publications in all of these languages.

- The basic Fight BAC!™ brochure, “Everyone Can Fight BAC!™”
- “Ten Least Wanted Foodborne Pathogens” and
- “Organisms That Can Bug You.” ●

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